

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4077

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 9028

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, SS, MO, AL, SP

SUBJECT: ALGERIA SEEN AS UNWILLING TO PROVOKE WAR WITH MOROCCO

SUMMARY: DIRGEN FOR SAHARA TOLD EMBOFF THAT LAST SPANISH SOLDIER WOULD LEAVE SAHARA JAN 10 AND THAT GOS/GOM RELATIONS HAVE TAKEN DEFINITE TURN FOR THE BETTER. HE BELIEVES ALGERIANS WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT F POLISARIO IN SAHARA IN EFFORT TO WEAKEN MOROCCO AND KEEP BU CRAA PHOSPHATE MINE SHUT DOWN, BUT WILL NOT PROVOKE WAR WITH MOROCCO. END SUMMARY

1. DIRGEN FOR SAHARA IN PRESIDENCY, COL. BLANCO, RECEIVED EMBOFF DEC 24 AND REPORTED THE FOLLOWING ABOUT CURRENT SITUATION IN THE SAHARA:

2. LAST SPANISH SOLDIER WOULD LEAVE VILLA CISNEROS JAN 10. EVACUATION HAS BEEN ALMOST WITHOUT INCIDENT WITH BOTH MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS EXCEPT FOR SOME INCIVILITIES
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BETWEEN MEMBERS OF EACH COUNTRY'S ARMED FORCES, E.G.,

REFUSAL TO SALUTE. GOS, HE SAID, CONSIDERED THE TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT AS SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME TO IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION CREATED BY FOLLOWING FACTORS: (A) GREEN MARCH, (B) INCAPACITY OF UN TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION, (C) F POLISARIO MILITANT INSURGENCY AGAINST SPANISH TROOPS, AND (D) NEUTRALITY ON THE PART OF SPAIN'S "TRANSATLANTIC PARTNER". GOS/GOM RELATIONS WERE ON BETTER BASIS THAN HERETOFORE BECAUSE OF THIS SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME TO A PRECARIOUS PREDICAMENT.

3. FOLLOWING SPAIN'S WITHDRAWAL A SPANISH DELEGATION LED BY LT. COL. VIGURI, SEC GEN OF SAHARA, WILL REMAIN IN EL AAIUN TOGETHER WITH A SMALL GROUP OF ARMED "PRIVATE POLICEMEN" TO OVERSEE REMAINING SPANISH INTERESTS.

4. BLANCO SAID THAT F POLISARIO HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY TROUBLESOME BOTH IN SAHARA AND IN MADRID. ALGERIANS, BACKED BY LIBYANS, WERE AIDING F POLISARIO -- SOME WERE INVOLVED IN ABORTIVE DEFENSE OF LA GUERA -- IN THE SAHARA AND SOME SPANISH JOURNALISTS WERE TREATING THE INSURGENTS AS LEGITIMATE INDEPENDENCE FIGHTERS DESERVING OF POPULAR SUPPORT. BLANCO SHOWED EMBOFF CLIPPING FROM DEC 24 "ARRIBA" REPORTING THAT ONE CORRESPONDENT KNOWN FOR HIS PRO-F POLISARIO VIEWS HAD BEEN BEATEN UP IN MADRID PARK BY UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS WHOM HE SPECULATED MIGHT HAVE BEEN MOROCCAN-PAID THUGS OR PERHAPS PAID AGENTS FROM ANOTHER QUARTER, PERHAPS WITHIN GOS. MOST SAHARAN STUDENTS IN SPAIN HAD RETURNED TO SAHARA TO JOIN F POLISARIO RANKS.

4. F POLISARIO INSURGENCY WOULD PROBABLY KEEP THE BU CRAA PHOSPAHTE MINE SHUT DOWN, BLANCO SIAD, PERHAPS PLAYING INTO HANDS OF MOROCCAN PHOSPHATE INTERESTS BY DENYING SAHARAN PHOSPHATES TO WORLD MARKET AT THIS TIME. GOS WOULD RETAIN 35 PERCENT INTEREST IN MINE AND WOULD BE GIVEN SUPPLIER'S CREDITS IN MOROCCO FOR ITS ORIGINAL INVESTMENT.

5. IN BLANCO'S VIEW, ALGERIAN TACTIC IS TO STRETCH MOROCCO'S MILITARY RESOURCES IN SAHARA SO AS TO WEAKEN

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MOROCCO'S OVERALL DEFENSE POSTURE. GOS, HE SAID, BELIEVED THAT MOROCCO WOULD BE WEAKENED IN ANY CASE BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF DEFENDING AN ADDITIONAL AREA EQUAL TO ONE-HALF OF SPAIN AND CONSEQUENTLY WOULD DO EVERYTHING ON ITS PART TO PREVENT F POLISARIO FROM RECEIVING ENCOURAGEMENT IN SPAIN. SPAIN, HE SAID, HAD INTEREST IN A STABLE MOROCCO, BUT THIS OBJECTIVE IS NOT MADE EASIER BY MOROCCO'S NEW RESPONSIBILITIES IN SAHARA.

6. ACCORDING TO ALGERIAN MINISTER OF INDUSTRY WHO TALKED WITH BLANCO IN EARLY NOV, ALGERIA WOULD NOT PROVOKE WAR WITH MOROCCO. HE SAID THAT ALGERIA WAS CONCENTRATING ON ITS OWN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS FOCUSED PRIMARILY TOWARDS THE MEDITERRANEAN AND NOT TOWARDS THE ATLANTIC THROUGH THE SAHARA, ADDING THAT ALGERIA WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS AND CONSEQUENTLY DID NOT WANT TO COMPROMISE ARAB UNITY. BLANCO SAID THAT HE GAVE CREDENCE TO ALGERIAN MINISTER'S VIEWS.
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